

*The Religion of LABOUR.*

*194.R.6*

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**S E R M O N**

PREACH'D IN

**CHRIST-CHURCH, *Dublin,***

BEFORE

The Incorporated SOCIETY for promoting *English*  
Protestant Schools in IRELAND.



By ROBERT, Lord Bishop of CORKE.

*Clayton*

Published at the Request of the SOCIETY.

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*At the Chapter-House of the Cathedral of Christ-Church  
in Dublin, Thursday March the 20th, 1739-40.*

**A**T a General Meeting of the Incorporated SOCIETY in *Dublin*, for promoting *English* Protestant Schools in *Ireland*;

Agreed, That the Thanks of this SOCIETY be given to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of **CORKE**, for the Sermon preached by him this Day before the SOCIETY, and that his Lordship be desired to print the same.

*John Hansard, Secretary.*



A

# SERMON, &c.

2 THESS. iii. 10.

*For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work neither should he eat.*

**T**HIS Command, here mentioned in my Text, was given to the *Thessalonians*, with regard to those Persons, who were to be maintained by the publick Contributions of the Church. For in the Infancy of Christianity, when Judaism or Heathenism were the prevailing Religions,



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it is very reasonable to imagine, that those who embraced Christianity would be cast off by their Friends; and therefore if they had not, either a Fortune to support themselves, or else followed some Employment, whereby they were capable of getting their daily Bread, that they must be supported by the charitable Benevolence of the Brethren: And as *not many mighty, not many noble were called* at first, the Fund could not be supposed to be very large, and therefore required Frugality in the Management.

Hence we find the Apostles, (a) to whom the Care of the Poor was at first committed, complaining to the Brethren, that their Attendance on the Poor took up so much of their Time, that it prevented them from following a much more useful Branch of their Calling; which was that of *preaching the Word of God*. They therefore appointed a Set of lower Officers in the Church; who, among other Things, had the Care of the Poor committed particularly to their Charge. But however, the Apostles did not think themselves discharged from inquiring into the Management of this Fund, or the Conduct of those who disposed of it; and therefore still continued it, in some measure, as a Branch of their Apostolical Care. Hence St. Paul, in his first Epistle to Timothy, where he is reminding him of the Duties of his Function, amongst other Things recommends to his Inspection the Care of the Widows; who being the greatest Objects of Charity, (b) were almost the only Persons,



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## *the Incorporated Society, &c.* 5

Persons, that were admitted to partake of this charitable Fund. And therefore he says, *Let not a Widow be taken into the Number, under threescore Years old. But the younger Widows refuse : For withal they learn to be idle, wandring about from House to House ; and not only idle, but Tatlers also and Busie-bodies, speaking Things which they ought not.*

They were therefore probably some such idle Persons among the *Thessalonians*, who gave occasion to *St. Paul's* Advice in the Words of my Text, *that if they would not work, neither should they eat ;* for in the Verses following he says, *For we hear there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busie-bodies. Now them that are such, we command, and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with Quietness they work, and eat their own Bread.*

I am very sensible, that those Persons, who are under the immediate Care and Conduct of this Corporation, to which I am speaking at present, are the young rather than the old : But give me leave at the same time to observe, that the way to make People industrious, when they are old, is to begin with them, when they are young. And that if *St. Paul* could expect from the old and infirm, that they should apply themselves to some kind of Work, in order to contribute, what was in their own Power, towards their own Support, how much more necessary may we think the same Advice, with regard to those, who are youthful and healthy?

## 6 *A Sermon preached before*

The great Advantage, which those charitable Foundations, that are under the Care and Conduct of this Incorporated Society, have over all others, which were erected before them, consists in this, that they have made Labour and Industry a part of their Constitution; by which Means, they have truly and properly obviated that Objection, which was too justly made against those kind of Charity-Schools, where the Children, who were bred up therein, were only educated in the softer and more delicate Employments of Life; and were thereby quite enervated in their Discipline, and rendered incapable, in their more advanced Years, of applying themselves to the useful Exercise of Manufactures, or the laborious Employments of Husbandry.

Whoever therefore takes upon him to speak in favour of, and to recommend those Protestant Working-Schools, which are now established by Royal Charter, must necessarily be lead, by the very Nature of his Subject, to speak in praise of Labour and Industry: Which perhaps may be a more useful Subject at present, than is generally imagined; because, there is a (a) Sect of Men risen of late Years in our neighbouring Kingdom, who, under Pretence of *Devotion* to God, would, instead of the Spade and the Plow, leave nothing in the Hands of these Children, but Manuals of Piety.

I shall

(a) *The Methodists.*

*the Incorporated Society, &c.* 7

I shall therefore in this Discourse attempt to consider the Duty of *Labour*, as it is a Branch of Religion, and shall endeavour to show how far Labour and Industry are consistent with Devotion to God, as recommended in the Scriptures: And to this end shall lay before you the Advantages thereof, as they may contribute not only to our Happiness in this Life, but also in that Life which is to come.

Certain it is, that Almighty God has created Mankind for Happiness, and that this is the End of his Being: He has therefore placed him here in this Life, in a State of Probation and Trial, to *work out his own Salvation*; and has made the Pursuit of Happiness, here in this World, to be the Means of attaining Happiness, in that World, which is to come.

One would think these were very easy Terms, and that there would be very little Trial in such a Pursuit. But the Misfortune lies here, that Men mistake sensual Pleasure for Happiness; quit the Substance for the Shadow; and are carried off from a future real Advantage by the Appearance of an immediate Profit. Whereas nothing is more certain, when duly considered, than that our Almighty Creator has required nothing from us to perform, in order to the Attainment of future Happiness, but those Things which, if practised, would really contribute to our Happiness in this Life: That all the Duties which are required from us, with regard to our Neighbour and ourselves, consist entirely in this; that we do all  
that



## 8 *A Sermon preached before*

that lies in our Power to make ourselves and them, as happy as we possibly can; and that we do nothing, which may contribute to the contrary.

In this therefore consists one of the Advantages of a laborious Life; inasmuch as we are enabled thereby to be of use both to ourselves and our Neighbours. For, with regard to ourselves, Labour and Industry are useful in a double Capacity: as they are the only Methods of acquiring and preserving Riches, which furnish us with all the Comforts of Life; and secondly, as they are the only true Art of making us relish and enjoy them when acquired.

With regard to the first, that Labour and Industry are the only Method of acquiring Riches: this is a Proposition, that seems so plain at first Sight, as to need little or no Proof. Some Men are indeed so happy as to be born to a plentiful Fortune; but then it must be considered, that this Fortune was the Acquisition of the Labour and Industry of their Progenitors: And if they themselves will not continue in the Practice of a laborious or industrious Life, they must certainly refund a Part of their Riches; and pay for the Labour of others, out of those Riches, which were the Purchase of the Industry of their Forefathers.

But much the greatest part of Mankind consists of those, who are obliged to work for their daily Bread; or at least for the Attainment of the Comforts, and Conve-

*the Incorporated Society, &c.* 9

Conveniencies of Life. The only Way of attaining which is by Labour and Industry, in those particular Callings, which God has given us Talents, or at least Inclinations to pursue. And thus much may be said in favour of Industry, that many Persons have, by the Dint of Application, acquired a great Facility, and some Degree of Excellency, in those Kinds of Works for which by Nature they seem not at all to have been designed. One would hardly be persuaded, if many had not been Eye-witnesses of the Fact, that a Person, born without Hands or Arms, should be capable of getting his Bread, and maintaining himself and his Family with Comfort, by such an Excellency in the Command of the Pen, and other manual Operations, as few that have their Hands are capable of arriving at. And hence may be justified many Observations of the wise *Solomon*, who recommends Labour and Industry as the surest Way of attaining Riches : For says he, *The Hand of the diligent maketh rich* ; and, *The Thoughts of the diligent tend to Plenteousness* : And again, says he, *Wealth gotten by Vanity shall diminish, but he that gathereth by Labour shall encrease.*

And as Labour and Industry are the proper Means of acquiring Wealth, so are they also necessary towards preserving that which Men are already possessed of. For it appears from our daily Observation, that the greatest Fortunes will sink and moulder away for want of some Pains and Care in the Management of them. Prodigality indeed will bring them to the

## 10 *A Sermon preached before*

shortest End, but Idleness and Neglect will produce the same Effect though by slower Degrees: Since *Drowsiness*, as well as Extravagancy, *shall cloath a Man with Rags*. And *he that is slothful, says Solomon, is Brother to him that is a great Waster*. The same Author has in another Place given a most pathetic and beautiful Description of this kind of Indolence. *I went, says he, by the Field of the slothful, and by the Vineyard of the Man void of Understanding: and lo, it was all grown over with Thorns, and Nettles covered the Face thereof, and the Stone Wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw and considered it well; I looked upon it and received Instruction. Yet a little Sleep, a little Slumber, a little Folding of the Hands to Sleep: So shall thy Poverty come as a Traveller; and thy Want as an armed Man. That is, with Expedition and irresistible Force.*

And as Labour and Industry are necessary towards attaining and preserving of Riches, by which all the Comforts of Life are to be purchased; so are they likewise necessary towards making all those outward Comforts feel inwardly comfortable, with regard to ourselves.

The Happiness of Life is much more equally distributed, than People generally imagine: When Persons in low Life see a rich Man carried about in State and Grandeur, they are very apt to imagine that Person to be happy; because they see nothing, but his outward Pomp and Show: Whereas it is the Heart alone,



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alone, that furnishes Happiness; and if that be not disposed to relish the Things with which we are surrounded, like Meat set before a sick Appetite, they rather create a Nauseating, than Satisfaction. It is not the Possession, but the Taste, the Relish, which a Man has for the Things which he possesses, that alone gives him pleasure in the Enjoyment. And I may venture to say, that nothing is so apt to give a Man a Relish for any thing, as the Trouble and Labour he is at in acquiring it. And hence comes the Observation of the Wise-man, that *the slothful Man roasteth not that which he took in hunting; but the Substance of a diligent Man is precious.*

And hence also it is, that rich Men, whose Fortunes are acquired to their Hands, are forced to have recourse to Games and Sports, in order to employ their Minds, or Bodies, in some sort of Labour or other; since Life would hang heavy upon their Hands without it. And if the poor industrious Working-man, who is forced to labour and toil for his Bread, did but see the Pains, which some of the richer Sort take in the Pursuit of what they call Pleasure; the tedious Hours and toilsome Nights, which are spent at Cards; the Passions which are raised, and the Vehemence with which Trifles are contended for; he would have little Reason to desire an Exchange: Since he labours for what is of real Value to him, whereas the Toils and Tiresomeness of the Rich, are only for such Things, as give them little, or no Pleasure in the Acquisition. This may in some sort be

## 12 *A Sermon preached before*

looked upon as a *Tribute* which Riches pay to Industry, and a literal fulfilling of the Curse, which was laid upon all Mankind at the Fall of our first Parent, *In the Sweat of thy Face shalt thou eat Bread:* And surely! if we must sweat, wiser is he who sweateth in Pursuit of that, which is valuable unto him, than he who sweateth for nothing.

But the Advantage of Labour and Industry with regard to our selves, does not only consist in what has been said, but also has this further Advantage; that by keeping our Minds and Bodies employed in such Thoughts and Actions as are at least innocent, we preserve ourselves from being engaged in such Thoughts or Actions, as are really sinful.

The Spirit in Man is a sprightly and active Principle; for, as Mr. *Locke* observes, if we look into ourselves, we shall find our Ideas always, whilst we are awake, or have any Thought, passing in Train, one going and another coming without Intermission. And as those Ideas, which are conveyed to the Mind through the Senses, are more frequent, and occur with less Trouble to the Mind, than those which come from Reflection; hence it is that those Pleasures, which proceed from Sensation, are apt to take up more of our Thoughts, than those Pleasures which are purely intellectual; many of which are only to be found out by tedious Deductions of Reason. And for this Cause Labour and Industry contribute

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contribute towards the Attainment of Happiness in a future Life, as they contribute towards preserving our Virtue and Innocence in this.

For if we do not take care to find some Employment for the Mind, the Mind will certainly find Employment for itself; and sensual Thoughts will infallibly crowd in, if our Attention be not pre-occupied, and engaged otherwise beforehand. And hence it is, that Idleness may be looked on as the Root of all Evil; by leaving the Mind open to all the Attacks, which the Flesh, the World, or the Devil are inclin'd to make upon it. Thus we find the Prophet *Ezekiel*, when he is summing up the Sins of *Sodom*, reckoning this of Idleness as one of the principal, *Behold*, says he, *this was the Iniquity of thy Sister Sodom, Pride, Fullness of Bread, and Abundance of Idleness was in her.* And *St. Paul*, in his Epistle to *Timothy* explains how it comes to be so great a Sin; and that is, because it leaves the Mind open to the Allurements of those Things, which do most easily beset us; for talking of those younger Widows, whom he would have *Timothy* exclude from any share in the charitable Contributions of the Church, he says, *For withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from House to House, and not only idle, but Tatlers also and Busie-bodies, speaking Things which they ought not.* The Exercise of which Talent of tatling from House to House, *St. Paul*, you see, attributes entirely to their Idleness.

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## 14 *A Sermon preached before*

As to the Usefulness of Labour with regard to our Neighbours, that seems so manifest and plain, that he who runs may see it. It is indeed often said, that the Riches of a Nation consist in the Number of its Inhabitants: But then it is taken for granted, that these Inhabitants are industrious; for otherwise every Inhabitant, who does not only not contribute towards his own Support, but that does not actually by his Labour and Industry gain as much, or by his Riches purchase as much of other Men's Labour, as will maintain himself and his Family, is a Burthen, rather than an Advantage to the Commonwealth.

The Body Politick has been often compared to the Body Natural, which *bath many Members, and yet all the Members of that one Body, being many, are but one Body.* And as the great Creator has, in the Body natural, formed ten thousand Ducts and Fibres, each of which has its use; and which, if it should be out of order, and disabled from performing its Functions, though at first it may not be of Significancy sufficient to be any great Inconvenience, yet if it be neglected, and the Disorder permitted to encrease, will in the End bring the whole to Destruction: So also it is in the Body politick, the ill Effect of every idle inactive Person may not perhaps be perceivable at first, or though it may disorder, may not endanger Society; but when Idleness arrives to any great Degree, so as  
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*the Incorporated Society, &c.* 15

to corrupt Numbers of People, the Evil is then sensibly felt, and becomes a real Distemper, which will in the End bring that Society to Destruction; and throw it, of consequence, into the Power of some ambitious and more industrious Neighbour. Hence the wise *Solomon* justly observes, *That the Hand of the diligent shall bear rule; but the slothful shall be under Tribute.*

But the Usefulness of Labour and Industry, with regard to a future State, does not only consist in this, that it is doing Service both to our Neighbours and ourselves; and of consequence renders us acceptable to God; but also, because it is doing God Service. Almighty God, upon the Fall of our first Parents, sent forth the Man from the Garden of *Eden*, *to till the Ground from whence he was taken.* We are all therefore to consider ourselves as God's Servants; sent into this World, to be employed in Labour, of some kind or other, for the Improvement of it: The High and the Ingenious in the Labour of the Brain; the Low and the Robust in the Labour of the Hand. Had it pleased the Almighty to have created us for a lazy and indolent Life, like the *Leviathan* in the Deep, only *to play therein*, he would have formed this whole terrestrial Globe into one Garden, like that of *Eden*; would have fed us, as he did the *Israelites* where they could not labour, with *Angels Food*; and cloathed us like *the Lillies of the Field*,  
which

## 16 *A Sermon preached before*

*which toil not, neither do they spin: Yet even Solomon, in all his Glory, was not arrayed like one of these.* But on the other hand we find by Experience, that our great Creator has formed this Earth in such a manner, as to be covered with Briars and Thorns, unless we take pains to root them from the Ground: And has made every thing here in this World in a kind of imperfect State; both with regard to ourselves and every thing that surrounds us; in order that we by our Labour and Industry should bring them to Perfection. Hence comes the Necessity of cultivating Arts and Sciences; of Traffick and Commerce; and of enacting all those Laws, which are contrived and constituted in all well governed Societies, for the Employment of all Persons of what Rank or Degree soever. For as the Body natural is composed of a great Variety of Members, among which even those *which seem to be most feeble are necessary*: so in the Body politick, there are lower, as well as higher Functions to be performed; each of which, though they may not be equally *honourable*, are nevertheless equally useful. And as *God hath set the Members every one of them in the Body, as it hath pleased him*; hence it becomes the Duty of every particular Person, into whatsoever State of Life it hath pleased God to call him, to do what lies in his Power as the Servant of God, for the Improvement of himself, of his Neighbour, and every thing round about him.

And



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And as this is the only Service we can possibly do unto God, the withdrawing ourselves from the useful Employments of Life, or shutting ourselves up in a Monastery, under the Notion of dedicating and *devoting* ourselves to the Service of God, is manifestly absurd, and contrary to the Ends of our Creation.

All Mankind ought to *devote* themselves to the Service of God : But how can this be better performed, than by employing those Talents, which God has furnished us with, for God's Service, in the Method which God has appointed? The Plowman, the Soldier, the Statesman, and the Divine, when they are occupied in the Works of their respective Professions, are all employed in the Service of God. And to imagine that none but Divines or Recluses, or those who give up their whole Time to religious Offices, are devoted and dedicated to the Service of God, is a great Mistake : For as this must at long run tend to the Destruction of Society, it can never be the true *Method* of pleasing God. Since as St. Paul observes with regard to the Body natural, *If the whole Body were an Eye, where were the Hearing? And if the whole were Hearing, where were the Smelling?* So with regard to the Body political, if every Person was to give up the principal Part of his Time to Acts of religious Worship, what would become of the common, and almost necessary

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## 18 *A Sermon preached before*

cessary Conveniencies of Life? The Ground would be untilled, the Face of the Country uncultivated; Arts and Sciences would be abolished; and every thing left in that unimproved State of Nature, which it was found in at first.

For this reason, it becomes a Part of the legislative Power in every Society to limit the Number of those Persons, who are to give up their Time to the preaching of the Gospel and propagating Religion: For every one that is more than necessary, is an useless Member to the Commonwealth; as well as an unnecessary Burthen to those who contribute to his Maintenance. While the visible *Manifestation* of the Spirit of God, and the miraculous Power of *discerning of Spirits* lasted in the Christian Church, those who were to be Apostles, or Prophets, or Teachers, were all singled out by the Direction of the Spirit of God; but since that visible and miraculous Power has ceased in the Church, the Power of Appointment, both of the Number of officiating Ministers, as well as of the Place where they are to officiate, has devolved on the legislative Power, into whose Hands by the Laws of God the Care of Society is intrusted. And all those, whether *Quakers* or *Methodists*, or of what Denomination soever, who pretend to be called or moved by Inspiration from the Spirit of God, ought in the first place to be able to produce a Criterion, or Mark, by which the

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## *the Incorporated Society, &c.* 19

the Motions of the Spirit of God in the Mind of Man are to be distinguished from the Motions of his own Mind or Imagination. For, till that is done, there can be no Certainty whether we are moved by the Spirit of God or not; and therefore, for want of this Criterion, a Man of good Intentions and a warm Imagination may be deceived, and led away by the Dictates of an Enthusiastick Zeal, under the Pretence of the Motions of the Spirit of God.

Such Persons may perhaps be thought righteous, but it is being *righteous over-much* (a); and proceeds from a partial Consideration of one Branch of the *Duty of Man*, without considering the *Whole* of it. For though both publick and private Acts of religious Worship are a necessary part of the *Duty of Man*, yet are they far from being that part, which is to take up the largest Portion of Time. The royal Preacher, speaking of the Duty of private Prayer, says, *Consider that God is in Heaven, and*

(a) Eccles. 7. 16. See also Rom. 12. 3. Μη υπερφρονεις κατ' εαυτον, αλλα φρονειν εις το σωφρονειν. Which may be rendered, *Be not more wise than becometh to be wise, but be wise unto Sobriety.* And these Words, 1 Cor. 4. 6. Μη οτις ε γινωσκουσιν φρονειν. Which may be translated, *Not to be wise above that which is written.*



## 20 *A Sermon preached before*

*thou on Earth ; therefore let thy Words be few.* The Reason of which Advice is, because God knoweth our Thoughts, and regardeth not the Number of Words, but the Intention of the Heart ; So that the Ejaculation of the Plowman in the Field, or of the Carpenter on the Housetop, may be more acceptable to God, than the long-winded Prayer of the Zealot ; or the tiresome Repetitions of the Recluse. And, with regard to the publick Duties of Religion, we find that God, when he created the World, selected only one Day in seven, which *he blessed and sanctified* ; but appointed the remaining six Days, for us *to labour in and to do all our Work.* And therefore the wise Son of Sirach, speaking of *laborious Work and Husbandry*, calleth it that *which the Most High hath ordained.* And can we then possibly show ourselves to be the Servants of God, or that we are *devoted* to his Service, more effectually, than by doing that which he hath *ordained* to be done?

What I have hitherto said, makes an Application to the present Occasion of the Meeting of this Assembly almost unnecessary. The Design, on which this Corporation was originally founded, was the breeding up of young Persons, both in the Practice of Labour and Religion ; in such a Manner and due Proportion, as that one should  
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*the Incorporated Society, &c.* 21

not swallow up the other; but both going hand in hand together, should countenance and encourage each other. And the particular Preference and Encouragement, which is given by this Society to the Children of Popish Parents, in order to educate them in the Protestant Religion, has this Advantage in it; that besides delivering them from all the Errors, and destructive Principles of that Religion, which encumber and embarrass true Devotion; you likewise deliver them from being bred up in a very idle Religion; that is, a Religion, which by its numberless Holy-days gives dreadful Encouragements to Idleness. *Cicero*, in his Treatise *Of Laws*, when he is speaking of the Institution of Holy-days, particularly insists, that Care be taken in the Appointment thereof, so that while the Service of the Gods is taken Care of, the Service of the Country be not neglected. Which is by no means the Case of the Popish Religion; since there is hardly one Day in the Year left in the Romish Calendar, which some Saint or other does not claim as a Day of Rest. And as I have already shewed that Labour, as well as Religion, is a necessary Part of our Duty to God, our Neighbour, and ourselves; the bringing of Children over, from the Popish to the Protestant Religion, must, if it be considered in this one Light alone, contribute to the saving of their Souls.

It

## 22 *A Sermon preached before*

It would be needless, my Brethren, for me to take up much of your Time in laying before you the Advantage and Wisdom in winning of Souls; or in exhorting you to the Practice of this Duty; since I can say in the Words of St. Paul to the *Thessalonians*, that *as touching brotherly Love, ye need not that I speak unto you, for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another, and indeed ye do it.* Nor can I avoid acknowledging the brotherly Affection of our neighbouring Kingdom; and in particular the liberal Donation of his Majesty King *GEORGE*. Our Saviour takes notice, that *the Kings of the Gentiles, who exercise Lordship over them are called Benefactors.* The Foundation of which Observation is this, that it is the same Word, in the *Hebrew* Tongue, which signifies both princely and liberal. Well therefore does his present Majesty deserve the same Appellation, who as he is literally our King, so is he also literally our Benefactor. However, considering how large the Field is which this Society has undertaken to cultivate, let us not slacken in our Diligence; but, in order to render the Harvest suitably great, let the Encouragement, we have hitherto met with, add new Vigour to our Endeavours; always bearing in Mind that comfortable and encouraging Text of the Prophet *Daniel*, wherein he assures us, when talking of the Day of Judgment, that *they which be wise shall shine as the*  
*Brightness*



*the Incorporated Society, &c. 23*

*Brightness of the Firmament, and they that turn many to Righteousness, as the Stars for ever and ever. To which happy State that all here may arrive, the Lord of his infinite Mercy grant; to whom be ascribed, as is most fitting, all Honour, Glory, Power, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, both now, henceforth, and for evermore.*

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# the Incorporated Society, &c. 23

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